

**Committee Members:**

Christy Adair – Chair  
Penny Gilbert - Secretary  
Penny Johnson  
Barbara McDermott  
Jesse Smith  
Cissy Varkey-Altamirano

CITY OF LOS ANGELES  
CALIFORNIA



Sherman Oaks  
Neighborhood Council



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**Public Safety Committee Meeting**

**MEETING MINUTES**

Tuesday, July 13, 2021

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In conformity with the Governor’s Executive Order N-29-20 (March 17, 2020) and due to the concerns over COVID-19, the Sherman Oaks Neighborhood Council Public Safety Committee meetings will be conducted telephonically until further notice.

Every person wishing to address the Committee must either dial 1-669-900-6833 and enter 842 7040 8817 and then press # to join the meeting - or join the meeting from Zoom’s landing page using Webinar ID: 842 7040 8817. Instructions on how to sign-up for Public Comment will be given to listeners at the start of the meeting.

**PUBLIC INPUT AT SONC PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE MEETINGS**

If the public wishes to address the Committee on any agenda item before the Committee takes an action on an item, the Public will wait to be addressed by the presiding officer before commenting. If accessing the meeting by telephone, the public is requested to press \*9. If accessing the meeting by computer, the public is requested to click on the “raise hand” button.

Comments from the public on agenda items will be heard only when the respective item is being considered. Comments from the public on other matters not appearing on the agenda that are within the Committee’s jurisdiction will be heard during the General Public Comment period.

Please note that under the Brown Act, the Committee is prevented from acting on a matter that the public brings to its attention during the General Public Comment period; however, the issue raised by a member of the public may become an item on a future committee meeting agenda. Public Comment is limited to two minutes per speaker unless adjusted by the presiding officer.

*The Neighborhood Council system enables meaningful civic participation for all Angelenos and serves as a voice for improving government responsiveness to local communities and their needs.*

*We are an advisory body to the City of Los Angeles, comprised of stakeholder volunteers who are devoted to the mission of improving our communities.*

## AGENDA

1. **Call to Order** - Christy Adair, Chair at 6:34pm
  
2. **Roll Call** – Penny Gilbert, Secretary  
**Present:** Chair; Christy Adair, Secretary; Penny Gilbert, Barbara McDermott, Penny Johnson, Jesse Smith **Absent:** Cissy Varkey-Altamirano
  
3. **Introductions** - Committee members, elected officials and staff.
  
4. **Demo: Kids Safety** - Maria Turnhout, **KMA Blackbelt Champions**, will demonstrate the following:

Learning about boundaries is necessary for both children and adults. Maria teaches both self-defense and empowerment for children. The importance of the training is to reinforce the safety measures over and over. Recognizing a situation is better than just using self-defense techniques. Kids learn through role play games. They understand that “voice” is an important tool. Creating distance between a child and strangers. Learning to say “NO” and mean it. A practice where a child does all of the above and then informs the stranger that the child will get an adult. A child must be taught about “lures” used by predators; props such as animals or pretending they are injured or need assistance. Reminding a child they must never go off with a stranger no matter what the stranger is telling them.

Christy Adair says these training measures are like learning safety through fire drills.

Lisa Petrus, attendee, reminds us that if there are several children, the predator can use a divide and conquer technique.

Penny Gilbert says Thank You for the amazing presentation as it was instructive for adults as well as children.

5. **Special Guest Speaker** – **Officer Lois Westphal and Officer Tamralyn Shepphird, Los Angeles Animal Services**, are Wildlife Specialist who discussed living around coyotes in Sherman Oaks.

- Website: [laanimalservices.com](http://laanimalservices.com)
- Wildlife email: [ani.wildlife@lacity.org](mailto:ani.wildlife@lacity.org)

For videos on “Safely Co-existing with Wildlife in Your Neighborhood” and “Safe and Humane Wildlife Deterrents” including coyote hazing, visit:

<https://www.laanimalservices.com/about-animals/wildlife/>

For a PDF brochure on Encounters with Coyotes, go to

[https://www.laanimalservices.com/pdf/wildlife/wildlife\\_coyotes.pdf](https://www.laanimalservices.com/pdf/wildlife/wildlife_coyotes.pdf)

LA Animal Services will respond to sick or orphaned wildlife through local Animal Services, reached by calling 311. It is illegal to feed wildlife. Coyotes will respond to humans, seeing how humans interact with their own pets and believe that humans will interact with them. If they approach clap loudly. This will scare them away.

Stacy Okonowsky, attendee, says she has noticed a significant increase in the coyote population--south of the Blvd and they roam in packs. She is fearful because Animal Services say we should learn to peacefully co-exist.

Officer Westphal says that she does notice more reporting of coyote sightings, but coyotes breed 2 times a year which explains the elevation of sightings and running in packs.

Stacy Okonowsky believes that it is just a matter of numbers increasing overall.

Officer Westphal says that in coming months the population and sightings should decrease. If a human makes a lot of noise, coyotes will learn to stay away from humans.

Christy Adair asks if there is an overpopulation problem and would the City step in and act.

Officer Westphal says that if the coyotes are removed it would create a negative impact in the environment and there would be consequences.

Barbara McDermott asked how high coyotes jump as there are various reports of their capability.

Officer Westphal says she has witnessed coyotes jump as high as 8 feet.

Christy Adair mentions that on Nextdoor people suggest leaving water out on very hot days for animals.

Officer Westphal says while it is not against the law to do so, wildlife will habituate to areas where food and water are easily accessible. They need to find their own resources and not become comfortable with humans.

#### 6. **Administrative Motions** - Action Item; Vote Required.

- Motion to approve the minutes of the June 8, 2021 Public Safety Meeting.

**Approve:** Chair; Christy Adair, Secretary; Penny Gilbert, Barbara McDermott, Penny Johnson, Jesse Smith. **Absent:** Cissy Varkey-Altamirano. **Abstain:** none

#### 7. **Covid-19 Crisis Update** – Jesse Smith

- The Los Angeles County Department of Public Health has confirmed 1,103 new cases of COVID. One month ago, on June 13, the 5-day average of cases was 201 and today the 5-day average is 1,095; this is an increase of more than 500% in one month
- The test positivity rate has increased nearly 700% from the 0.5% seen a month ago; today's test positivity rate is 3.4%. To date, Public Health has identified 1,259,772 positive cases of COVID across all areas of LA County and a total of 24,554 deaths.
- There are 375 people with COVID currently hospitalized and 23% of these people are in the ICU. Testing results are available for 7,126,000 individuals with 16% testing

positive. Sherman Oaks Vaccination rates-on shot-age 16+ 75.3% and 65+ 86.5%

**8. Community Police Advisory Board Update (“CPAB”) Update – Penny Gilbert**

- Crime Overview--Valley
- Stolen Vehicles up 18% for the year
- Theft from motor vehicles up 34% for the year
- Assaults up 11.5%
- Residential burglaries not rising in Sherman Oaks
- LAPD’s most important issues are finding health care and housing for the homeless. They are working with various City agencies.

**9. Social Media Misinformation – Barbara McDermott**

- Social Media posts continue to indicate that many residents still, falsely, believe that police won’t be dispatched or respond unless a crime has actually occurred. As a blanket statement, this is not true, and believing this misinformation could prove dangerous. Police do respond to suspicious activity calls. There are some calls, depending on the circumstances, when police won't be dispatched, but the operator will tell you during your call whether or not the police will be dispatched. There are also some calls where, although officers won't be dispatched, the information will still be broadcast to area officers alerting them to the activity/person and allowing them to stop and make contact with that potential suspect if seen.
- If you're unsure whether to call the police about suspicious activity, **call**. Call while it's happening or as soon as possible when the suspect is likely still in the area. Don't take matters into your own hands - call the police and be a good witness. You don't know if the person may have weapons on them, or what they might be willing to do if you confront them. You also don't know if they're wanted by the police or have a warrant out for their arrest.
- Your call to the police when you see suspicious activity (i.e. a prowler, trespass suspect, possible burglary/theft from motor vehicle suspect, etc.), could be the call that prevents a crime and/or ends in an arrest of a criminal.
- If you're unsure whether to call 911 or non-emergency dispatch 1-877-275-5273 (1-877-ASK-LAPD), call 911. The operators are trained to obtain the information needed to determine the response.
- Important Note: If you call to report something, and the situation then escalates or changes after speaking with the operator, you need to call back to let them know. Unless you call back, the police won't know that the situation has changed.

**10. Public Comments – Comments by the public on non-agenda items within the Public Safety Committee’s jurisdiction.**

- No public comments

**11. Committee Response to Public Comment**

- No public comments required response

## 12. Final Business and Announcements

- a. Weekly Homework Assignment
  - None given.
  
- b. Committee Business
  - 2 community leaders recently passed: Linda Pruitt, Chair, Lake Balboa EP Committee and LAFD Assistant Chief Frank Borden also known as the “Father of Cert”.
  - 2 books for Parents to help keep kids safer: “Protecting The Gift” by Gavin de Becker and “Kid Zone” by Donna Chalet and Francine Russell
  - Midnight on July 4<sup>th</sup> - Sherman Oaks experienced 2 jolting earthquakes. The epicenter was North of Mulholland and East of Beverly Glen.
  - National Night Out is August 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2020.

## 13. Adjourn at 8:14pm

### THE AMERICAN WITH DISABILITIES ACT

As a covered entity under Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act, the City of Los Angeles does not discriminate on the basis of disability and upon request will provide reasonable accommodation to ensure equal access to its programs, services, and activities. Sign language interpreters, assisted listening devices, or other auxiliary aids and/or services may be provided upon request. To ensure availability of services, please make your request at least 3 business days (72 hours) prior to the meeting by contacting the Department of Neighborhood Empowerment by calling (213) 978-1551 or email: [NCsupport@lacity.org](mailto:NCsupport@lacity.org)

### PUBLIC ACCESS OF RECORDS

In compliance with Government Code section 54957.5, non-exempt writings that are distributed to a majority or all of the board in advance of a meeting may be viewed at our website: [www.ShermanOaksNC.org](http://www.ShermanOaksNC.org) or at the scheduled meeting. In addition, if you would like a copy of any record related to an item on the agenda, please email: [gil.imber.sonc@gmail.com](mailto:gil.imber.sonc@gmail.com).

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**RECONSIDERATION AND GRIEVANCE PROCESS** -- For information on the NC’s process for committee action reconsideration, stakeholder grievance policy, or any other procedural matters related to this Council, please consult the NC Bylaws. The Bylaws are available at our Board meetings and our website [www.ShermanOaksNC.org](http://www.ShermanOaksNC.org).